



## OFFICE OF MAYOR JERRY SANDERS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### FACT SHEET

## **MAYOR SANDERS ANNOUNCES MAJOR INCREASE IN CITY'S READY-RESERVE FIRE-RESCUE FLEET**

### *Reserve Fleet Now the Largest in City History*

Mayor Sanders announced today that the City's Fire-Rescue Department Ready-Reserve Fleet has increased dramatically in size to 18 ready-reserve fire engines, up from just three reserves available last year. There are also six reserve ladder trucks in the fleet. This is the largest the City's reserve fleet has ever been, and it is 25 percent larger than the reserve fleet in existence at the time of the Cedar Fire.

#### **WHAT IS THE READY-RESERVE FLEET?**

- The Ready-Reserve Fleet consists of reserve fire engines and trucks which supplement the fully equipped 46 fire stations that make up the City's Fire-Rescue Department.
- In the event of a major structure fire or disaster such as an earthquake or wildfire similar to the Cedar Fire, the ready-reserve fleet operates as a stand-by, back-up fleet that can be immediately mobilized to augment the staff and apparatus assigned to fight the fire.
- The fleet is staffed by off-duty fire fighters who are called back to duty on an emergency basis to respond to major incidents.
- The fleet is also used to back-fill frontline fire engines and trucks in everyday use that have to be taken offline temporarily for repair and maintenance.
- With 18 engines and six ladder trucks, the Ready-Reserve Fleet will help ensure that all 46 fire stations have adequate apparatus to respond to emergencies at all time.
- A larger Ready-Reserve Fleet translates into increased fire protection for the citizens of San Diego.

### **WHERE WILL THE READY-RESERVE FLEET BE HOUSED?**

Approximately six to eight of the engines are currently housed at the Fire-Rescue vehicle repair facility in Kearny Mesa at 3880 Kearny Villa Road.

The remainder of the engines and ladder trucks will be housed throughout the City in larger fire stations that have adequate room to store the reserve apparatus.

As frontline engines and ladder trucks are taken offline for repairs and maintenance, a Ready-Reserve Fleet apparatus will be deployed to fill in while the vehicle is being repaired.

### **HOW DID THE READY-RESERVE FLEET EXPAND SO MUCH IN ONE YEAR?**

The City now has in place a systematic replacement rotation plan to keep all vehicles in the fleet for no more than 15 years. In the past, an incremental and inconsistent process was employed that allowed for apparatus in the fleet to be utilized for more than 20 years.

This past year nine new fire engines and four ladder trucks were purchased. As new apparatus are purchased, older apparatus are put into the reserve fleet, sold to other jurisdictions, or in some cases, sold to salvage companies.

The City has also set about consolidating fleet management under the Fire, Police and General Services Business Process Reengineering (BPR), which has led to increased efficiencies and cost savings. This has helped increase the size of the reserve fleet.

There is a program currently underway that will bring 51 new vehicles to the Lifeguard and Fire-Rescue fleets. Some of these new vehicles will replace older vehicles currently in service, and some of these will be added to the Ready-Reserve Fleet.

### **WHAT ADDITIONAL FIRE-RESCUE APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT, STAFFING AND PHYSICAL PLANT IMPROVEMENTS HAS THE CITY FUNDED RECENTLY?**

Over the past two years as part of the annual budget, the Mayor has proposed and the City Council has approved funding increases for the Fire-Rescue Department to allow for the purchase of new apparatus and equipment. Some of these are:

- Eight fire engines.
- Three ladder trucks.
- Seven support vehicles (sedans, SUVs, etc.).
- New and better fire protection clothing and gear for all firefighters.
- Microwave equipment for support vehicles and on Copter 1 to allow for televising, in real time, scenes of incidents to commanders on the ground.

- 200 mobile data computers installed on all engines, trucks and ambulances and battalion vehicles allowing personnel access to more detail information on incidents and the geographical layout of the city.
- 260 VHF portable radios which will give San Diego crews the ability to communicate directly during emergency incidents with other fire service agencies which use VHF frequencies and do not use the 800 megahertz system used by San Diego Fire-Rescue.
- The 911 emergency call center (Fire Communications Center) was upgraded with new phone and computer systems as well as new work stations for call-takers and dispatchers.
- Funds were allocated, to be matched with federal grant funds, to rebuild the sinking/unsafe Lifeguard boat dock at Quivera Basin. Construction will start in September with completion in mid winter 2008.
- A new bomb squad vehicle is in the final stages of being put into operations, as well as a state-of-the-art communications trailer which is designed to be used during major emergency incidents such as wildfires, earthquakes and terrorist attacks.
- Two code compliance officers were added for brush management.
- \$2.2 million was also allocated to help with deferred maintenance for Fire and Lifeguard facilities

### **READY-RESERVE FLEETS HELP DURING DRY MONTHS**

California is experiencing its driest conditions in 90 years, which has prompted concern from fire officials across the state about a potential increase in fire danger. Already this year the City has seen an 18 percent increase in vegetation fires over this time last year, with the most dangerous months still ahead of us. There have been three to four structure fires a day this year.

Having a large Ready-Reserve Fleet helps the Fire-Rescue Department respond to brush fires while helping to maintain adequate staffing levels citywide to deal with everyday fire and life safety calls.

### **HOW CAN CITIZENS HELP?**

The Mayor and Fire Chief continue to call on all citizens to be responsible and vigilant about protecting their homes and neighborhoods against canyon and wild fires during this dry season.

Property owners are urged to maintain 100 feet of defensible space around their structures by thinning brush and pruning trees and shrubs.

Additionally, people must take care to be responsible with fire – with their backyard grill, campfires, cigarettes, driving ATV's in the backcountry, target shooting, and by not using fireworks.

The best way to protect your life and property from a fire is to prevent it in the first place.